

# **Paul Cuffee School**

## **Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting**

**May 19, 2011**

**A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Paul Cuffee School was held on May 19, 2011 at the Paul Cuffee High School in Providence, Rhode Island.**

**Present: Su Almeida, Kathleen Alvarez, David Burnham, Russell Carey, Allyn Copp, Joan Cannady Countryman, Stefano Crema, Dorothy L. Fields, Robert Kelley, Keith S. Mathews, Maria Monteiro, Joop Nagtegaal, Martha Newcomb, Dorothy Patrick, Carolyn Pemberton, Sarah Reis, Ana-Cecilia Rosado, Earl Smith III, Babak Taleghani.**

**Excused: John Cariati, William Clifton, Leanne Nyahkoon.**

**Paul Cuffee Staff Present: Jonathan Conklin, Becky Coustan, Nina Giannotti, Julia Karahalidis, Michael Obel-Omia, Nell Sears.**

**The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. with a moment of silence. President Joop Nagtegaal began by welcoming everyone to the May meeting of the Board of Trustees. He commented on the financial crises facing the state, city, and organizations in the community. There are numerous challenges, although fortunately no proposed cuts to education funding to date.**

## **Approval of Minutes**

**The minutes of the March 17, 2011 meeting of the Board were approved unanimously with corrections noted. The motion to approve was made by Keith Mathews and seconded by Carolyn Pemberton.**

## **Head of School May Report**

**Mr. Obel-Omia reviewed several items from his report, circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting. He began by thanking Becky Coustan and Nina Giannotti for making the arrangements to host the Board in the Paul Cuffee High School. He noted that the school is in the midst of hiring season, and much time is being spent on recruiting and interviewing. The hard work of Julia Karahalidis was recognized and applauded in light of the recent second grant received from the Brown University Fund for the Children of Providence. Other highlights of the report included: the recent Parent's Association Yard Sale which yielded \$1200 to the Annual Fund (which is on track to exceed its goal this year); an event being held this week to welcome new students to the school; final preparations underway on books for members of the Board to be distributed at the annual meeting in June; a Board of Regents meeting held earlier in the day where a proposed moratorium on school construction projects was discussed. There were questions for Michael and discussion among the Board.**

## **Presentation to the Board: The Maritime Theme at Paul Cuffee School**

**Michael Obel-Omia presented to the Board on the topic of what does the maritime theme mean at Paul Cuffee School. He reviewed a variety of examples of maritime themes and topics across the curriculum and the grades, which demonstrated the breadth and depth of the maritime theme as an organizing principle of the school. Examples included class trips to partnership organizations like the New Bedford Whaling Museum, Save the Bay, and the Community Boating Center. The teaching staff are committed to the maritime theme, but also to honoring the full life of Paul Cuffee, including his dedication to education, equality, freedom, and social justice. Mr. Obel-Omia and others recognized the work of the teachers in developing these strengths across the curriculum. There were questions from and discussion among the Board.**

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Human Resources Committee**

**Carolyn Pemberton delivered the report of the Human Resources Committee. She reviewed several highlights from the written report which had been circulated in advance, and answered questions from members of the Board on several topics.**

## **Finance Committee**

**Babak Taleghani delivered the report of the Finance Committee. He reviewed the fiscal status of the school, year to date. He reviewed the recommendation of the committee to establish a required investment committee for the 403(b) Retirement Plan. Following discussion, Su Almeida moved that, upon recommendation of the Finance Committee, Carolyn Pemberton, ex officio as chairperson of the Human Resources Committee, Alicia Luzon, and Jonathan Conklin be appointed members of the Investment Committee of the Paul Cuffee School 403(b) Retirement Plan, and that Black Point Wealth Management be engaged to provide investment monitoring and educational services to the Plan. The motion was seconded by Joan Countryman and approved unanimously.**

**Babak then reviewed the discussion had by the Committee regarding the salary scale for certified staff. Following discussion, Allyn Copp moved that, upon recommendation of the Finance Committee, the proposed 11 step salary scale for certified staff be accepted and approved as presented. Carolyn Pemberton seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.**

## **Plant & Property Committee**

**Russell Carey delivered the report of the Plant & Property Committee. He reviewed the discussions held since the last meeting of the Board**

with representatives of the Department of Environmental Management and the Environmental Protection Agency regarding the potential for grant funding which could be applied to the project to improve the playground and parking lot area at the Lower School. The requirements and steps necessary to be eligible for the grant were reviewed with the Board. He also reviewed the status of ongoing explorations of potential sites for the Middle School which might be preferable to the current location, and the long-term possibilities for a unified campus. There were questions from and discussion among the Board.

### **Committee on Trusteeship and Governance**

Joan Countryman delivered the report of the Committee on Trusteeship and Governance. She reviewed the board experience matrix survey results, and discussions held by the Committee regarding a potential strategic planning process. The Committee will make recommendations for new members of the Board at the Annual Meeting in June.

### **Executive Committee**

Joop Nagtegaal delivered the report of the Executive Committee, He noted that the Head of School evaluation process is underway, and he reviewed the draft Head of School goals for the 2011-2012 academic year which were distributed to the Board. It was suggested

**that charter renewal be added to the goals for next year.**

## **New Business**

**There was no new business brought before the Board.**

## **Adjournment**

**Carolyn Pemberton moved to adjourn. Babak Taleghani seconded.  
The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Russell C. Carey, Clerk**